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PATENT
Customer No. 22,852
Attorney Docket No. 08049.0011

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Oscar Lee Avant et al.

Serial No.: 09/652,707

Filed: August 31, 2000

For: APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR
PROCESSING MAILPIECE
INFORMATION BY AN
IDENTIFICATION CODE SERVER

) Group Art Unit: 3653

) Examiner: Daniel K. Schlak

#14
2304

Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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JAN 23 2004
GROUP 3600

Sir:

RESPONSE TO THIRD RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

In a third restriction requirement dated November 18, 2003, the Examiner required restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121 between three groups of claims: Group I containing claims 1-20, 113-142, and 227-241, Group II containing claims 21-68, and Group III containing claims 173-226. The Examiner further stated that claims 69-112 and 143-172 are linking claims that link Groups I and II.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the Examiner did not mention claims 242-262. In an attempt to avoid the issuance of yet another restriction requirement, Applicants suggest that claims 242-262 would fall into Group I as the Examiner has characterized it. Therefore, this response is based upon the assumption that Group I includes claims 1-20, 113-142, and 227-262.

Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement because the Examiner has not shown that there would be any burden to examine all of the claims. In particular, the

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Examiner has classified the claims of both Group I and Group III in class 700, subclass 224. Thus, the Examiner would undertake the same search for the claims in these two groups, and no undue burden would be experienced.

However, Applicants wish to avoid spending any further time on the restriction/election process. Therefore, Applicants elect to prosecute the claims of Group II, including claims 21-68. Furthermore, Applicants request examination of claims 69-112 and 143-172, characterized by the Examiner as linking claims between Groups I and II.

Applicants submit herewith a Petition for One Month Extension of Time for responding to the Restriction Requirement with the requisite fee. Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.



By: Reg. No. 38,742 /tr
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Dated: January 20, 2004

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